536 There is no scenery. The costumes and headdresses vary according to the characters represented. The masks of colored lacquer worn by the actors, their accessories (weapons, scarves, etc.) being traditional and invariable enable the fictitious characters on the stage to be identified.

/178 The theatre of animated shadows, similar to the shadow theatre
101/ of China and Java, tends to disappear little by little.

Laotian Decoration.

Laotian decoration is characterized by a somewhat mannered
531 elegance which can be noticed in the motifs of the pagoda doors and
178 windows. The Laotian artisan is, however, endowed with an extremely well developed artistic sense, but the present day demands do not enable him any longer to live by his handiwork, and the importation of manufactured articles tends to make the artist disappear. /89/ He can only survive by royal patronage. The royal palace for this reason shelters sculptors on wood and ivory as well as goldsmiths, but
/644/ their produce is not sold and the tourist will hardly be able to bring back with him typical Laotian objects.

However, the weaving of silk materials of divers shades, often laminated with gold or silver, is still done on a sufficient scale to
● /236/ satisfy the passing tourist.

The Sin

This is a skirt reaching from the hips to the ankles. It is of a
291 rather somber color with a design of vertical stripes very close together and not very evident. This skirt is decorated on its lower edge with a flat trimming of two or three rows of gold or silver braid. At the top of the skirt a belt of red cloth, more or less embroidered, relieves the rather dark tone. This garment is a regular cylinder having the same width on its entire length. When the woman emerges from her bath she lifts her skirt, gathered into the shape of a crown, above her head and lets it slide down the length of her body. She fixes it without hooks or fasteners to her belt by means of a turned in pleat tied in front leaving most of her belly exposed. A bright colored scarf of cotton or silk thrown over one shoulder and completely covering the breasts completes the costume. The most beautiful scarves come from Samneua, Luang Prabang and Khong. The jewelry most frequently seen consists of
301 silver bracelets, necklaces and buttons, rings, long crossed over chains /chaînes-sautoirs/, flat clasps, and belts usually of silver but sometimes of gold.

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